

State should focus on its rivers: water expert

Tasmania needs to change its focus to protect its rivers, Freshwater Systems manager and University of Tasmania research fellow Peter Davies says.

Dr Davies said there should be more emphasis on the efficient use of water in Tasmanian agriculture.

He said a recent debate about water metering in Tasmania highlighted inconsistencies within the State, with the Government pushing to impose water metering in the city rather than the country.

"In Tasmania, the definition of water efficiency seems to be 'how efficiently can we get water from our rivers,' rather than how efficiently can we

use each drop of water," Dr Davies said.

"My feeling is that while there are opportunities to investigate where we can use more water, the emphasis should be on how well people are using the water that they have.

"The Government should be doing more to help people use water more wisely."

Dr Davies feared the "honesty system" was open to abuse, and said water meters should be introduced on farms.

He said the ecology of the river relied on its natural cycle, which in many cases ran at low levels over summer and flooded over winter.